



CLASSIFICATION

The Personnel System Reform Act of 2002 called for a substantial reduction in the number of job classifications and a more responsive, streamlined classification system that would facilitate the effective use of state personnel resources and enhance career mobility and advancement.

Title 357-13 WAC describes the classification plan and position allocation. These rules apply to nonrepresented employees. They may be superseded by collective bargaining agreements for represented employees.

What will the new classification structure look like?

The new structure consolidates similar classes and class series into broad occupational categories. The categories are comprised of four levels – entry, journey, senior/lead, and expert/supervisory. Each level within the category is considered a separate class with a separate title and salary, and a different level of work performed.

What are the benefits of changing the classification structure?

Ultimately, the new structure is intended to provide a framework that enables managers to best carry out program functions and provide the best services to the public. The broader descriptions offer managers increased flexibility in changing assignments while maintaining the same level of responsibility assigned to the position.

The new structure consolidates both general government and higher education classes into a single system.

The structure provides for a dual track option that allows employees to move up through the series (occupational category) without having to assume supervisory responsibilities. Instead, employers may choose to assign specialist or technical expert responsibilities as needed to carry out program tasks.

Will all existing higher education and general government classes immediately be transitioned to the new structure on July 1, 2005?

No. Due to the scope and extent of the changes involved in implementing all of the personnel reform initiatives at once, affected employers requested that changes to the classification plan be phased in over time in order to lessen the initial impact on the employers' staff and organization.

How are the new categories being phased in?

The new categories are being adopted in groups with a lagged effective date. For example, the first group was adopted by the Director of Personnel in September 2004 and is effective June 1, 2005.

Groups 2 and 3 are planned for adoption in May, effective January 1, 2006. Group 4 is planned for consideration during the 2007-2009 Biennium.

In addition to phasing in categories over time, some occupational categories will have two phases of consolidation in order to minimize the impact on agencies/institutions. For example, an Information Technology category was consolidated into six levels, with a planned second consolidation to four levels.

How will my salary be affected as a result of my position being consolidated into occupational categories?

If your position is reallocated to a class with the same salary range, you will retain your previous base salary and periodic increment date.

If your position is reallocated to a class with a lower salary range, you will retain your previous salary and periodic increment date. If your previous base salary is below the maximum step of the lower range, you will continue to receive periodic increments until you reach the maximum step of the lower range. If your salary exceeds the top step of the lower range, no further periodic increments are due.

If your position is reallocated to a class with a higher salary range you will retain your previous base salary and periodic increment date upon reallocation. You will continue to receive periodic increments until you reach the maximum step of the new range.

Currently, general government uses classification questionnaires and higher education uses position questionnaires to determine which class is the best fit for a position (that is, how to “allocate” a position). Will these forms continue to be used?

No. A new position description form (PDF) is being developed. The new form provides more information about the specific position, such as the skills/competencies needed to be successful. Employers may choose to use their own form as long as it contains the required information.

Currently, employees may submit a revised classification questionnaire or position questionnaire to have the allocation of their position reviewed. Will employees be able to request a position review?

Yes, employees may initiate position reviews using a new position review request form.

Currently, general government employers are delegated allocation authority by the DOP, while in the higher education system all allocation authority is decentralized. Will this change in the new system?

The new rules give all general government and higher education employers authority to allocate positions.

Currently, an employee is appointed to the reallocated position if she/he has been doing the duties for:

- **12 months for general government**
- **Six months for higher education**

If the employee hasn't done the higher level duties long enough, the employee must be referred from a register or eligible list to be appointed. Does this change in the new system?

In both general government and higher education the employee remains in the reallocated position if she/he has performed the higher level duties for six months and meets the competencies and other position requirements. If the employee hasn't done the higher level duties for six months, the employee may be promoted to the reallocated position without being certified or referred provided the employee meets the position competencies/requirements and the employer chooses to promote the employee without competition. Otherwise, the employer must give the employee the opportunity to compete for the position.